



Basic Rodent Control after a Storm

After a storm, many rodents are displaced from their natural habitat. As a result, these animals seek areas which provide food and shelter. Unfortunately, many of the new rodent havens are in houses, sheds, barns and other buildings. Structures damaged by the storm are particularly attractive and provide easy access to rodents. The unwelcome pests can cause property damage, and in extreme cases can pose a potential health problem.

Rats and Mice

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- Remove as soon as possible all debris around houses and buildings that could provide protective cover for rodents.
- Keep lawn and field vegetation mowed at a low height to eliminate protective cover for rodents.
- Remove any potential food source such as household trash, waste grain, or other foods that might attract mice and rats.
- Close openings into buildings around water pipes, electrical wires, vents and doors with ¹/₈-inch mesh hardware cloth and/or sheet metal.
- Try registered toxicant baits with zinc phosphide or anticoagulants for mouse and rat control. **Note: It is illegal to use toxic baits outdoors as they may kill non-target wildlife.** In special circumstances, a permit can be acquired from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- Set snap traps to capture nuisance rats and mice. Successful trap baits for the trigger mechanism include whole kernel corn, peanut butter and oatmeal, and oatmeal paste. It is legal for homeowners to set traps outdoors, but care should be taken so that non-target animals are not trapped. Traps should be checked each day. If a lawn service or pest control technician is hired to trap nuisance animals, that person must have a Nuisance Wildlife Permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Squirrels

- Prevent squirrels from climbing onto roofs by encircling trees and poles with 2-foot-wide metal collars 6 feet off the ground.
- Attach metal sheets using encircling wires held together with springs to allow for tree growth.
- Trim trees to prevent squirrels from jumping onto roofs.
- Prevent squirrels from traveling on wires to houses and buildings by installing 2-foot sections of light-weight 2- or 3-inch diameter plastic pipe. Split pipe lengthwise, spread open, and place over wire.
- The pipe will rotate on the wire and cause traveling squirrels to fall.
- Close openings to attics and eaves of houses and buildings with heavy ½-inch wire mesh or sheet metal.
- Use live and lethal traps to catch squirrels. Good baits are slices of orange and apple, walnuts and pecans removed from the shell, peanut butter and sunflower seeds. By FWC designation, the eastern chipmunk, Sherman's fox squirrel and the Big Cypress fox squirrel are protected species. They may be destroyed or taken only by FWC permit. Once the squirrel is captured, it must either be released away from the capture site or killed in a humane manner. If the squirrel is to be released, a relocation permit must be obtained from your regional FWC office or you must hire a licensed wildlife relocater to release the squirrel for you.
- Check with the local law enforcement officials and wildlife conservation officers in your area to determine if firearms are permitted for shooting squirrels.

For more information...

“Non-chemical Rodent Control,” available on the Web at : <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG218>.